

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes from the Fort Detrick Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting
June 12, 2002

1. Index of Minutes

Items addressed at the meeting are listed below, with corresponding section numbers indicated in the column on the right.

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2. Meeting Opening

Lt. Colonel Don Archibald convened the meeting at 7:30 p.m., on Wednesday, 12 June 2002 in Conference Room 3, 810 Schreider Street, Fort Detrick, Maryland.

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3. Attendance

Members Present:

Colonel John Ball, Commander, US Army Garrison, Fort Detrick
Lieutenant Colonel Donald Archibald, P.E., Director, Safety, Environment, and Integrated Planning Office (SEIPO), Installation Co-Chairman
Mr. Gerald P. Toomey, Community Co-Chairman
Mr. Larry Bohn, Frederick County Health Department
Mr. Joe Gortva, Environmental Restoration Manager, SEIPO
Mr. Michael Kurtianyk, Community Member
Mr. Thomas Meyer, Project Manager, US Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District
Ms. Helen Miller-Scott, Community Member
Mr. Daniel Patton, Safety and Loss Control Manager, City of Frederick
Mr. Douglas Scarborough, Restoration Oversight Manager, US Army Environmental Center
Mr. Thomas Wade, Community Member
Ms. Gyla Crutchfield, Analytical Services, Inc. (Recording Secretary)

Others Present:

Mr. Fred Boecher, US Army Environmental Center
Mr. Rusty Collins
Mr. Chuck Dasey, Public Affairs Officer, HQ USAMRMC
Mr. David Iseri, Shaw Environmental
Mr. William Kahl, Maryland Department of the Environment
Mr. Clint Kneten, US Army Corps of Engineers
Ms. Eileen Mitchell, Public Affairs Office, USAG
Mr. Gary Pauly, Local Resident
Ms. Anne Servantez, BAHC
Mr. Kirk Ticknor, Project Manager, IT Corporation

Members Absent:

Ms. Helen Alexander, Community Member
Mr. Charles Billups, Ph.D., Community Member
Mr. William Effland, Ph.D., Community Member
Mr. Michael Gresalfi, Community Member
Mr. Paul Offutt, Program Manager, Frederick County Health Department
Mr. Dennis Orenshaw, US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Region III
Ms. Linda Robinson, Community Member
Mr. Stewart Taylor, Community Member
Mr. Craig Toussaint, Community Member

4. Opening Remarks and Introductions

Lt. Colonel Don Archibald welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that Area B-11 remained shut down while conducting modifications to the ventilation systems, screening process and safety procedures. No dramatic changes in excavation or removing drums have been made.

The project is expected to resume operations next week.

Lt. Colonel Archibald then introduced Colonel John Ball who has assumed the position of Garrison Commander after the reassignment of Colonel Greenwood. Colonel Ball requested that all attendees introduce themselves prior to his opening remarks. Colonel Ball advised that while based in San Antonio, Texas, over the past several months he had been monitoring the activities of Frederick and Fort Detrick via the Frederick News-Post. He explained that his background is mainly field soldiering and field operations and that the activities being conducted at Area B-11 are very unfamiliar to his background. After his visit to the area, he feels confident that there is nothing to hide at Fort Detrick and openly welcomes community questions and visits.

He continued to advise that he will be with Fort Detrick for the next three years and his priorities are to clean up Pit 1 as well as the other pit areas. He is focusing on obtaining the appropriate resources so that the momentum can continue once operations are resumed at Area B-11. His concentration will be on remediation and cleaning up the areas while remaining focused on safety. The area is planned for eventual use by both the military and the community.

Lt. Colonel Archibald continued by stating how pleased he is that the RAB meetings are attended by such a diversified group, clearly demonstrating the interest from the community. He also welcomed new board members from the City of Frederick and the Health Clinic.

Lt. Colonel Archibald then introduced Tom Meyer who will make a slide presentation regarding the status of the remediation project.

5. Area B-11 Status

Copies of a Fort Detrick Remedial Investigation (RI)/Feasibility Study (FS) handout (Enclosure 1) were provided.

Mr. Meyer reviewed the project activities since the suspension of operations in April 2002. After further analysis, the materials that had been found in Area B-11 were determined to be non-pathogenic and have since been incinerated. Negative results were returned for all contractor employees who had been swab-tested for meningitides at the request of their company physician following the finding of the suspected vials. At this point all roll offs, which were on site, have been reprocessed and incinerated and there are no materials now on site. The Edgewood Chemical Biological Command (ECBC) has identified the pathogens in the found vials as pneumonia, tuberculosis, Brucella and E. Coli. In order to make identification, these

pathogens were re-grown under laboratory conditions. It was noted that the pathogens were not found in the soils. Colonel Ball requested a more comprehensive explanation of Brucella, which is a less-common bacteria and a species of which was used during the offensive-weapons system period. Lt. Colonel Archibald provided that information and expressed their early concern that the species contained in the vial may have been that which had been used in the weapons program. However, multiple laboratories and testing provided verification that the contents of this vial were not, in fact, that which had been used in the offensive-weapons system. Lt. Colonel Archibald further explained that this strain of Brucella is transmitted via farm animals, etc., and is a mild form of pathogen.

Mr. Meyer continued with the slide presentation, covering subjects of Risk Assessment and Retooling (to include the installation of a HEPA filtration unit), causes of schedule delays and rescheduling, and additional funding obtained. A detailed description of the high-efficiency HEPA filtration process in the ductwork was provided by Lt. Colonel Archibald. It was noted that HEPA filters are placed both pre-carbon unit and post-carbon unit thus providing a filter treatment and a final safety. Additionally, upgrading of biological monitoring has been put in place both inside and outside the building. A Polymerase Chain Reaction System (PCR) is run every day to obtain samplings from both viral and bacterial biological warfare materials. These samplings are then sent to USAMRIID every evening for verification of non-release. The PCR was described as the technology used in the cleanup of the Capitol Hill anthrax occurrence. The screening, which was described as the most effective method, can be completed within two hours, and determines the nature of the pathogens without returning false-positives. Specific air samples are obtained by use of cyclonic impingers – a typical industrial hygiene-type device which runs it through a water solution, or an impactor - where particles are impacted upon a sampling plate. These two sampling methodologies, determined according to which area is being studied, both use the same overall screening methodology. Prior to shutting down each day, this process is performed before anyone is released from the containment structure.

Mr. Meyer advised the new schedule indicates operation to begin on June 18, 2002, and that planning for additional pits is being conducted pending funding availability. Lt. Colonel Archibald added that the additional funding recently obtained was the result of the support and involvement of many individuals and organizations.

Responding to a question regarding the recent water shortage in the Frederick area, Lt. Colonel Archibald advised that there was little effect on the project at this time but has the potential of effect in the long-term. The Fort does not use any water from Frederick City, but rather from its own water treatment facility. Fort Detrick is addressing the initial problem of avoiding anything getting into the water and will follow up with any long-term problem that may be presented. There has been a drop in the water levels and as discussed previously, the quarterly sampling results cannot, scientifically, be said to have a direct connection between that and the concentrations being lower. However, it can be said that the concentrations have not increased and in fact, the concentrations are diminishing based on the sampling. It is thought that this may

be a benefit of the freeze wall usage. It is hoped that a major portion of the contamination has been removed from Pit 1 and no continuance of leeching into the groundwater will occur.

Pit 1 appears to be the most contaminated area and it was stated that a large cache of drums are located within three to four feet. Upon retrieval of these drums, a better determination can be made regarding the amount of material remaining in the pit. The focus of the project has now been placed upon removing these drums and with the recently-obtained additional funding, the project is expected to continue past the government fiscal year, into November, allowing removal of the drums and the most heavily contaminated soils. Continuing operations at that time will be dependent upon any funding provided as 'end-of-year' funds, or that funding which will be made available for the following fiscal year. Contents of the other pit areas cannot be clearly determined until commencement of remediation activities. Colonel Ball will work to have funding maintained so that breaks in the cleanup are kept to a minimum establishing a clear path forward to completion.

6. Area A Update

Mr. Meyer continued with the presentation focusing on the schedule for monitoring and sampling for Area A. The semi-annual sampling report is estimated to be available in September 2002. The results of the first round of sampling are not yet complete, but should be available by the next RAB meeting in August 2002.

7. Area B Update

Mr. Meyer then presented an update on the documents for Area B. An additional Investigation Work Plan is pending the completion of a site background study, which is slated to begin in July. Areas B-1 and B-18 have been determined by EPA, the State, and their partnering groups to have sufficient information and are being evaluated for Close-Out Documents. Quarterly sampling conducted in May will have results presented at the August RAB meeting. Area B planned activities include residential and on-post well and surface water sampling, dye trace study, water treatment system for the Krantz property, as well as additional research and background studies.

Lt. Colonel Archibald stressed the importance of continued sampling and monitoring of the plume considering the area water shortage and the potential effect of this situation upon water conditions. Continued sampling and testing provides assurance and validity of the original assumptions.

8. Area B Water Levels

There remains approximately a one-half foot drop in levels since October 2001. This is approximately six feet, on average, lower than the 1997 level. No other changes were noted.

9. Area C Update

Finalization of the groundwater data is in process and the Final Report schedule based on funding. The ash removed from the ash pit was placed in the Area B active landfill, and is proving beneficial in removing ecological risks from the nearby stream and the Monocacy River.

Lt. Colonel Archibald referred to the sludge from the Wastewater Treatment Plan, was the subject of newspaper articles earlier in 2002. This sludge, which was awaiting NRC approval for disposal as normal sludge, contained minute (30 picocuries) amounts of tritium (radioactive material). Lt. Colonel Archibald related that in conversation with radiation protection officer, tritium is typically used in the military, in an Army compass which may have about 270 millicuries of tritium. Comparing the amount of tritium in a compass with the amount contained in the referred-to sludge, it would take 11 tons of sludge to equal the same amount of tritium that is in a compass. Keeping in mind that a compass would be placed on the belt of a soldier, the amount of tritium in the sludge is, therefore, evaluated as extremely minute. It is understood that any time radionuclides are contained in a substance; it is justified reason for concern. However, with the continuance of the sludge-removal process, a continued reduction in the level of tritium is noted. During the four-month period of the summer, the sludge is dried and disposed of. There are three bins that within the last week were dried and containerized. Dependent upon the NRC and the state of Maryland regulatory approval, this will either be shipped to Utah, which is the least-preferred method, or preferably, placed into the Fort Detrick landfill. Fort Detrick continues to monitor this situation and has been in communication with the local community regarding this issue. Colonel Ball added that Fort Detrick is caught in a complicated process issue. Because of the NRC licensure, the sludge produced through the Fort Detrick process is classified as a radiological hazard. This is not due to the measurement, but rather based on how the license and process was set up (i.e., a process classification). The amount of radiation is so small and is probably the same as that contained in residential lawns, etc. To this point, NRC has declined approval until Fort Detrick has its license decommissioned, at which time the material becomes normal sludge by classification. Since the Fort Detrick permit requires on-site storage, the containers are located along the fence line. In consideration of the nearby school and residential area, a shield has been put in place along the fence to alleviate the appearance. Without approval to dispose of as normal sludge, these containers would be shipped to Utah for disposal at the cost of \$250,000. Considering that this material is not hazardous, Colonel Ball would prefer to use this funding on other areas of the project facilitating further remediation activities more beneficial to the community.

Further discussion was held regarding the half-life of tritium and other materials, the decommissioning plan, and the NRC licensure issue. During 2001, the NRC was requested to approve an exception declaring the nine containers as normal sludge. This followed a risk assessment which determined that these containers contained no risk to the public. It was noted

that a response from the NRC regarding these nine containers be approved for disposal was not received until after related newspaper articles were released.

Since specific permits are required to transport the material, it must remain stored in Area C. For comparison purposes, samples of city and county sludge have been taken and many were found to have a higher level of activity than those from Fort Detrick. It remains, however, that since Fort Detrick has the base which holds the license, it also owns the treatment facility and must adhere to regulations as specified by NRC and the state of Maryland.

A video of the process within the containment area was presented with commentary by Joe Gortva. Scenes included workers performing the excavation process using a front-end loader, sorting and spreading of the material, application of the bleach, and the shredding and sampling processes. Also shown and described was smoke, generated by the presence of a white phosphorus material after excavation, as well as instances where smoke emerges from the pit area prior to excavation. It was brought to the attention of the audience that this procedure is slow, tedious and methodical.

Upon inquiry, Mr. Gortva advised that since Fort Detrick is not a treatment and disposal facility, it cannot perform chemical treatment on-site, but rather decontamination is done when materials are sent off-site for incineration. The biological treatment is done in order to transport the materials to Texas. Lt. Colonel Archibald added that whenever a flare up in the soil occurs, it is broken down as small as possible, and allowed to oxidize before placing it into containers in order to minimize risk. Colonel Ball advised that it was determined to be more cost-effective to containerize and ship these materials for disposal rather than decontaminate on-site since the contamination at Fort Detrick was minimal and it avoids the lengthy permitting process. Safety was again stressed and described as paramount to the military, the Corps of Engineers and the contractors involved in the project. A discussion was held regarding the time necessary to process a roll off and additional details of the process, to include any problems the bleaching process may cause for shipping and incineration.

10. Community Co-Chair Comments

Mr. Jerry Toomey reminded everyone that the data regarding the well sampling would be presented at the next RAB meeting. An additional audience member questioned the contents of the vials found earlier, which appeared to have possibly been a personal cultural collection. It was also asked if the contents of any drums found would be removed and individually evaluated prior to any disposal. Responding in the affirmative, it was noted that this has, in fact, occurred and all contents were individually characterized.

Mr. Toomey continued with a community welcome to Colonel Ball and shared his hopes for progress.

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11. Date/Agenda Items for Next Meeting

RAB meetings are held bimonthly on the second Wednesday of the month. Due to schedule conflict, the next meeting will be the third Wednesday, August 21, 2002, at 7:30 p.m., at Fort Detrick.

The agenda for the next meeting was not discussed.

12. Meeting Closing

Colonel Ball and Lt. Colonel Archibald commented on the active community involvement and attendance and again offered an invitation to attendees to present questions either verbally or written. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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Reviewed by:

Donald F. Archibald
Lieutenant Colonel, US Army
Co-Chairman

//s//

Approved/Disapproved

John E. Ball
Colonel, US Army
Deputy Installation Commander

Enclosure:

1. Fort Detrick Remedial Investigation / Feasibility Study

DISTRIBUTION:

Each RAB Member (w/o enclosure)

Each Meeting Attendee (w/o enclosure)